

Leit 40

A
SERMON

Preached before the Right Reverend Father in God,

JOHN, *Lake*

Lord Bishop of

BRISTOL.

At His

Primary Visitation

I N

BRISTOL,

October 30.

And now Publish'd at his Lordships Request; as also the
desire of several others that heard it.

By John Gaskarth, Fellow of Pembroke-Hall in Cambridge,
and Vicar of St. Nicholas in Bristol.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Walter Kettilby, at the Bishops-Head in St. Paul's
Church-yard, MDCLXXXV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Sermon Preached upon the first occasion after the Death of His Grace, John Duke of Lauderdale, in the Chappel at Ham; by John Gaskarth, his late Graces Chaplain, and Fellow of Pembroke-Hall in Cambridge.

TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,
JOHN
Lord Bishop of
BRISTOL.

My Lord,

A S in Obedience to Your Lordship, I make
these Publick, so in pursuance of the
same Duty to my Ecclesiastical Superior,
and as the wisest thing I can do, our Du-
ty being always our greatest Wisdom, I put them
under Your Lordships Protection, who not only from
Your Episcopal Learning, and Piety, are most pro-
perly qualified to be a Patron in this kind; but
from Your Paternal care of the Author himself,
and these Studies and Endeavours of his,
A 2 which

The Epistle Dedicatory.

which You have brought into the World, are obliged to be so: As for them, I can say no more, but that they are extremely Honest, and have the Charitable design of Preaching in them. And that they may have a due influence upon Your Lordships Subordinate Ministers of Christ Jesus, to make us all Good Men, and effectual Preachers of the Gospel; as also, to reduce those that have forsaken the assembling of themselves together in the Charity of Christs Flock, and establish Unity among us, and Your Lordship, the common Father of it, which is the greatest Blessing that I can request for us, for them, and for your Lordship, is the earnest Prayer of

Your Lordships,

Most Obedient Son,

and Humble Servant,

John Gaskarth.

Acts XI. 24.

For he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghost, and of Faith, and much people were added unto the Lord.

I Shall not give any Historical account of the Text, either as it relateth to the Subject of it, the Holy Apostle *Barnabas*, how he was a Good Man, and full of the holy Ghost, and of Faith; or as it respects the People Converted by him, what Multitudes they were; but shall only insist upon the connexion of these two Propositions, because *he was a good man, &c. much people were added unto the Lord.* From whence I shall observe the necessity that those of the Priestly Function are under of being good, in order to the happy success of their Ministry. And this I shall endeavour upon these Arguments from the contrary, that he who is otherwise an ill Man in any Instance,

First, He cannot be Universal in his Doctrine.

Nor, Secondly, Sound in his Principles.

Nor, Thirdly, Persuasive and prevalent upon his hearers.

Nor, Fourthly, Can he speak with sufficient boldness.

Nor, Fifthly, With any Authority.

Nor, Sixthly, Can he be industrious enough in his high Calling.

And, Seventhly, If he could be all this, his ill Example will hinder the good Effect of his Preaching.

First then, A Bad Man cannot be universal in his Doctrine, he that would be a true Preacher of Righteousness, and have the proper efficacy and success of it, must deal impartially with sin, and level his Discourses at every particular of it; he must reprove all Impiety whatsoever, and not suffer the least sin without its just censure and reprehension. But he that is personally guilty of any open Vices, will be apt to represent them too favourably

rably, and not in their own proper and ugly Colours, rather offering what may be probably spoken for their Apology or Defence, than give a just Description of their abominable Nature, and of those bitter Consequences that do attend the commission and habit of them. For every touch of his Pencil upon those Vices will open a fresh Wound in his own Bosom, and torment him with the dismal apprehensions of his own Guilt, and the eternal Misery belonging to it; this will rouse up his benumbed Spirit, and hinder all his quiet satisfaction in his former Vices. For such a monstrous thing is sin, that as long as we have any due reflection in us, or until we have debauched our judging Faculties, and be arrived to a Spiritual Lethargy, and senseless state of Mind through the custom of it, there is no pleasure to be found in it. This Reflecting upon those Vices that he himself is guilty of, will scare his Soul with those necessary terrors of a sinful Course, and represent to him the lamentable Circumstance that he is in; this will rub up his benumbed Spirits into a lively Sensation of those putrifying Sores that his sins have left in him, and so bring him to that painful thing of remorse for them, and an awakened apprehension of the just desert and punishment of them; and all this being no Bodily malady, but in the mind it self, that Seat and Centre of perception, must needs be sharp and insupportable, according to that of the Wise Man (*Prov. 18. 14.*) *A wounded Spirit who can bear*; and therefore we may well suppose that this obnoxious Person will pass by his own Offences, or not commemorate them with that just aggravation that belongs to them, seeing there is self-Condemnation in it, and he assigns himself over to all the Miseries of another World in that very Instance. So that he who lives in the Practice or Habit of any Vice, is likely to be but a lame Doctor; and cannot *universally reprehend sin*, which nevertheless is absolutely necessary to a right promotion of the Christian Holiness, according to the true extent and comprehension of it, in his hearers, since St. James hath told us (*2. 10.*) *that whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* There is an Universal Obedience due to Gods Precepts, and therefore he that offends against one, does offer the same Contempt and Indignity to the All-wise Law-giver;

giver ; as he that transgresseth more largely ; he is guilty of the Breach of that Obedience, and consequently punishable as well as if he had broken all. So that he who remains in the Custom, or under the Dominion of any sin himself, must needs prove but a very ineffectual Priest, and Minister of the Gospel, he only preaching in this confinement, and not generally to all, can never promote the work of Conversion in that extent he ought to do, or advance a common Salvation to all Men, according to the Comprehension of those Merits which were the Purchase of it ; nay, 'twere well if he were only ineffectual, but, alas ! by speaking too favourably of his own Vices, as he must needs do, *unless* we should suppose an extraordinary Impulse or Violence upon him, which perhaps sometimes is, by Prophesying smooth and pleasant things, such as are more suitable to depraved Nature, he is likely to have a greater influence upon the People, and immerse them deeper in their own Ruine. For this is the fundamental Misery of Man, that he submits himself too much to his carnal Affections, by this means advancing them to an undue strength in him, and then too greedily embraces whatsoever can be contrived to defend and patronise his Vices, which are only the pursuits or gratifications of these Affections, thus *Jerem. (5.31.) The Prophets prophesie falsely, and my People love to have it so.* This was the Case of backsliding *Israel*, and doubtless is still with the generality of Men, he shall have the most Profelytes that gives the greatest liberty to corrupt Nature, and most indulges the evil Inclinations of it ; as may be exemplified from the flourishing estate of our Neighbour-Church, which, alas ! is too much Catholick, although in many things it be not Christian. But we may ask the Question, with the Prophet, And what shall be done in the end thereof ? It must needs be a terrible end that must befall these Men, who have thus misled whole Multitudes into Ruine, through their Delusions and false Doctrines.

Secondly, A vicious Person cannot be sound and Orthodox in his Doctrine : It is absolutely necessary, in order to give a true Judgment in any thing, that the proper Faculty in that Case be in a right Frame and Disposition, otherwise the thing will not appear in its own Natural Qualifications, but be represented in a dif-

rent manner, according to the Distemper of the Faculty. Thus to men under some Diseases of Body, all Objects do appear in undue Colours, Figure, and Magnitude, perfectly other things than they are in their own Nature. So that if the Mind of man be indisposed and out of order, that being the Faculty by which he judges of Divine Things, he can have no just perception of them. But Vices and Immorality do quite debauch all our Faculties, they blind them with Passions, and warp them with undue Affections, and pervert all their Sense and Knowledge of Spiritual Objects; what Ruines these have brought into our Nature is too apparent from the fall; how dusky are our Understandings at the best ever since, unless they be advanced above themselves through Grace, and have a Beam of the Divine Wisdom displayed upon them? How false in their Judgments, and how apt, in a base Inclination to Sense, to prefer the Worse before the Better, Earth before Heaven, the Empty and Fading Enjoyments here, before the Substantial and Permanent Possessions of another World? How obscure then must those Minds be, and how incapable of discerning Spiritual things, that besides the injury done to us, or the impairment of our Original Constitution in the sin of our first Parents, are further depraved with customary Vices, and live under the influence and habit of them? Such distorted Minds as these can no more perceive or relish the Noble Excellencies of Vertue, than blind men can apprehend the Beauty of Colours, or those that are deaf the Harmony of Musick, they both wanting their proper Faculties in their several Cases. There is a refined sensation, *νόστιμον* *ἡμετέριον*, as *Platinus* speaks, which is only obtained from vertuous living, absolutely necessary for our apprehension of Diviner things, and therefore *Aristotle* frequently intimates in his Morals, that 'tis impossible for any to have a right Sense and Notion of Vertue, unless they be also good, and have lived under the Influence of it.

Thus he that is a Wine-bibber, and places his whole delight in the silly brisk impertinences of that Liquor, will not be able to discern the true pleasure and satisfaction which is in Temperance; nay, he will rather argue in the defence, and for the necessity of his Vice;

Vice ; that man is in his own nature too grave and serious a thing, and his Life is but a melancholly business at the best, unless you infuse into him some quicker and more airy Spirits than his own ; when, alas, the Effect of this is freely to inflict that upon himself, which, if received from another, might well be accounted the greatest Injury ; that is, for the time perfect, Madness and Distraction ; and 'tis Gods great mercy that he does not in justice punish this great abuse of Understanding, or his best Talent committed to Men, and make that madness perpetual, extending it self through his whole Life. But blessed be his Holy Name, that gracious Being takes better care of us, than either to reward or punish us according to our deservings.

And he that is inflav'd to that sordid thing of Covetousness, or has his mind determin'd to the Possessions of this World, will scarcely be perswaded of the Vertue of Beneficence, and being Charitable. He will be more apt to conclude after this manner, that God may make our Heaven Bricks, and our Earth Iron, and hinder all our Provision and Increase at home ; he may compass us about with foreign Enemies, and stop the income of our Riches from abroad, and he may make these sad circumstances of things to continue for a long season ; what then will become of me, when through my Charity and the scarceness of the Land, there is nothing left in my hands ? Is it not better to reserve my Riches, and provide of my own Store for the evil time, than expose my self to these Uncertainties ? This is his deprav'd opinion of things, and his practice from it ; and indeed 'tis very true, God may of his infinite Mercy send these Judgments upon a sinful Nation, for their Correction and Amendment ; but he might consider, if he had freedom for it, what folly it is to rebell against God, who has commanded the Rich to support the Poor, that their abundance should be a supply for the others wants, when in this neglect of his, or this carnal Wisdom to secure himself, he provokes God to deprive and denude him of all that he has, which he is so retentive of, because he does not pay the just homage of it ; I say he might consider this, what folly it is to rebel against an expresse Precept, which also has this present consequence of it, and distrust that careful Providence

vidence that clothes the Lilies of the Field, and feeds the young Ravens that call upon him. Shall That neglect Man the Master-work-man-ship of Heaven, for whose enjoyment this lower World was created; shall That neglect man, in the very performance of his Duty? *O ye of little Faith.* It is a free thought that of Solomon, which the captivated Soul of a covetous Person is not capable of, that Charity is our surest Provision, as engaging God for us, (*Ecc. 11. 1, 2.*) *Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

Thus also the proud Person, who is only filled with emptiness, (if I may so speak) or the vain opinion of himself, will not be able to observe the great Vertue of Humility, he will rather account it a very debasement of himself in several instances of it; than as it really is the most becoming and graceful Ornament of a Creature, or indeed a necessary thing to dependent Beings, and therefore he will more insist upon those Excellencies that Mans Nature is invested with, and upon these thoughts advance himself higher in his own folly; alas! not considering that none of these Prerogatives which Man enjoys, were originally his own, but only through Gods goodness are derived to him from that infinite Ocean of the Divine Nature, and therefore there is no reason for our glorying, or Self-esteem, supposing we still maintained our first ground; and possessed the perfections of our Creation; but the greatest Argument of a profound Humility in all of us, is the sense of our free descent from these, that we have violated our indispensable obedience to our Maker, in our repeated Sins and Rebellions against him, and thereby have depraved our Natures, and contracted so many Infirmities into them.

The envious Man, in like manner, will be apt to Apologise for his worst of Vices, affirming that a like portion of things does belong to *all men*, being equal by Nature, *who* have the same attainments in them, or *who* are of the same growth, and standing in Vertue; and he sees no reason to suspect his own proficiency, although his Discontentment, and his Envy from it, be a sufficient proof against him. But in this possession of his he cannot duly consider,

sider, which would quite deliver him from his Envy, that God discerns the most hidden Dispositions and Tempers of Men, with their Differences to one another, and therefore knows best how to dispense these outward enjoyments to every ones particular benefit; and he affords him this scant proportion to prevent Intemperance, or Covetousness, or some other Vices in him, which although he perceives not, who only understands himself from his opportunities, either of Sin or Vertue, yet perhaps he is naturally propense and inclined to.

And the Luxurious and Wanton Person, cannot perceive the heavenly nature of Chastity, and the strict Obligation he has to it, he will rather defend his polluted Practices from the agreement of his Vice, that his very Principles and Constitution prompts him to it, and 'tis certainly lawful to enjoy the proper satisfactions of our Nature, or else the Wisdom of our Maker might be called in Question, and his Goodness towards us. And it is very true, we may so; but we must consider, which Men in this hurry of Vice cannot do, that God has made us better than Brute Creatures, and given us Faculties above them, which we ought to obtain our proper satisfactions from; or at least when we taste of the Animal Nature, in a due Measure and Regulation by them. Thus it appears that Covetousness, and Pride, and Envy, and Wantonness, brings a certain Infirmary into our Reasons, and depraves our Judgments in their respective Cases; and I might Demonstrate that every particular Vice, indulged and adhered to, does produce some Error or other in Point of Doctrine; and although every Vicious Person either has not sufficient Parts, and Ingenuity, to found a new Heresie; or has not arrived at such a Degree of Impudence to go against the Sound Doctrines and Venerable Authority of the whole Church, yet he is certainly Heterodox in some Opinion or other. Immorality, without question, is the great Parent of false Divinity, all these Pestilent Heresies that have rent the Seamless Coat, and Church of Christ, for above these sixteen hundred years, have arisen from this Original. What was the reason that the Arch-Heretick *Simon*, should defend all Vices lawful, but that he himself was Universally addicted to them? I pass by
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that wild Assertion of his, that he was the only Deity, who under the several names of the Blessed Trinity, at different times had appeared to Mankind, which yet was the plain Product of his Pride, as is evident from his Conference with the Apostles (*Acts* 8. 19.) when he would have bought the Holy Ghost of them, that is, the glaring Gift of working Miracles; I say, I pass by this, as being a meer Delusion of his upon the People, which from the Sense of Humane Infirmities, he could never persuade himself of. Why did those filthy Dreamers, the *Gnosticks*, despise Dominion, and speak Evil of Dignities, so highly maintain the Christian Liberty, as thereby to exempt all Christians from the just Authority of King, or Master? Why did they so contumeliously treat the Apostles, and Governours of the Church, denying all their Superiority over them; but because of those two horrible Vices which they were infected with? First, according to St. *Peter's* description, that they walked after the Flesh, in the Lust of uncleanness, allowing themselves in the full enjoyments of their Carnal Affections: and therefore no wonder, if they hated all those who offered any restraint to them; if the very Apostles, who exhorted all Men to the inward Purity of the Gospel, not only to abstain from Sinful Actions, but endeavour after an undefiled Spirit and Heart within them, if they were despised and rejected by them: Or, Secondly, because of their Pride and Insolency, which they had learned from their Master the Magician, not enduring to see others have a pre-eminency, and be Lords over them. And I am confident that this base Vice, this Spirit of Pride, is the true cause why our Brethren *Gnosticks* at home, do recede from the Church, that special Place of Grace, and Blessing; and despise their lawful Governours. Pride, I say, is most likely the Principal cause of their Separation, in that they so contemn the lawful Ministers; although perhaps in an obstinate adherence to this Vice, they may afterwards be blinded with it, and fall into an Erroneous Conscience from it. Why also did these same *Gnosticks* deny the reality of Christs coming in the Flesh, but because they would not live a Gospel Life, or observe the Holiness of his Doctrine? And why did they affirm it lawful to deny Christ in time of Persecution,

secution, but because they had softned their Spirits, and lost the invincible Christian Courage, in a brute pursuance of their Lusts and Carnal living ? For we read of the Primitive Martyrs, that they often abstained from their lawful enjoyments, and used themselves to great severities, as a due preparation for that Fiery Tryal. What is the reason that even in our own Age, in all the Light of the Gospel, some have been so bold to deny the Existence of their Maker, when the instances of himself, or a wise Providence, are so apparent in the World, when we can give no account of any particular in Nature, without recurring to a Deity, or an Infinite Power and Wisdom, that was the Cause of it ; and when this gracious Being is the greatest support and comfort of our Lives in all our Circumstances whatsoever : One would not desire to live in a World void of Providence, said the Heathen Emperour ; nay, 'twould be the most insupportable misery to do so: And why also do men so industriously annihilate themselves, and deny the immortality of their own Souls, but because they have led such polluted lives as cannot endure such a righteous Being, or that which is necessary to it, an after Judgment. Thus we find (and might be more particular, if 'twere needful) that every vicious man is unsound and erroneous in some of his Opinions. This is the proper Efficacy of any Sin, when we come to the Habit and Custom of it, that it changes our natural Conceptions of things, and inclines, and reconciles our Judgments towards it ; and therefore how much (think we) does it concern the Ministers of the Gospel, those that watch over the Souls of the People, and must give an account to God for them, to endeavour after an universal Holiness of Life and Conversation, lest by living under the influence of any Vice, their Doctrines be corrupted and false, tending rather to the subversion of their Hearers, than the building them up in their most Holy Faith ; and if so, they ruine not only the People, but more especially, and in a more grievous manner themselves also, who have been the cause of it.

Thirdly, A vicious man cannot be so perswasive and prevalent upon his Hearers ; it is not to speak with great fluency of words, or in a lofty stile, or to entertain his Auditors with round and

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delectable Rhetorick, that will perswade Men, and procure their Assent in any matter ; all this in an ill design, when the Cheat is once discovered, and the intent of imposing upon them fairly laid open, will exasperate the more, and set their consent at a greater distance ; they'll then begin to suspect all that such a Person says to them, and if he offers any just, or equitable matter, that must be ascribed to the power of his Eloquence, which can change the natural Colours of things, and represent them as he pleases ; rather than to *truth it self*, and so be rejected for the sake of *that* : Thus his Rhetorick will create a prejudice against him ; and the more Eloquent he is, the more suspicious they will be of him, and the more he'll be distrusted by them. Nor is it always sound Truths and clear Argument that will certainly find approbation ; one may reason of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, as concerning Truths as ever were insisted upon, and yet not gain many Profelytes ; indeed this last terrible Topick of Judgment to come, may well make Men tremble, as it once did *Felix* ; but this motion is not like to continue long, when they shall observe, that the Author of this great Doctrine does not live as if ever he expected the event of it ; when they take notice that his actions are not influenced by that ultimate end ; that he is neither so Temperate nor Righteous, as he ought to be who believes that he shall come to an impartial Tribunal, and just Sentence in another world ; they'll presently suspect his whole reasoning ; and although they can discern no Fallacy in it, yet they will conclude, that there is doubtless some there, or else, say they, why does not he himself direct his Conversation accordingly, who is as much concerned in the business as we ; this is some counterfeit affrightment or other, to bring us to some advantage of his, but he shall not have his design upon us ; his Practice is a better demonstration to us than all his Words and Discourses are. So that even Truth it self, when spoken by all kind of Persons, will not prevail in the World : If a bad Man should appear in a Patronage of Vertue, let his Arguments be never so cogent, yet his Vices, or Immoral living will betray the Cause. This is the sad consequence of open Sin in those, whose Office is to instruct others. Nor is it vehement Asseverations

verations, or strength of Oaths, that can always obtain an assent to them, one does not commence a credible Author from these; for he that is wicked in other respects, why should we suppose that he'll scruple to assert a Lye, and give the confirmation of Perjury to it, when that will serve his purpose. Some Men may fill their Mouths with big Oaths and Imprecations, even till they burst again, in the words of *St. Chrysost.* (*tom. 6. p. 514.*) and never be the more credited for that; others, says he, only nodding with the Head, will gain a Deference and Belief to them; and therefore this is that effectual *Orator* that irresistably persuades and forces Consent wheresoever it appears; namely, *An uprightness of Life, and a just Conversation towards all Men.* What as does proceed and flow from these, can never want Approbation, good Counsel, and sober Instructions, when a sincere and honest Heart does dictate them, must needs be embraced by all Men: There can be no ground of Objection to them, nor any Suspicion to prevent them, when the Probity of the Counsellor and his Vertue is once discovered. For as a Good Man is the likeliest to have the best knowledge of things, his mind being in the most fit and proper frame for that purpose, so he will represent nothing to any Person, as the matter of his Election, but what he is fully convinced of to be true himself, and so from his known Honesty he is presently consented to by all Men.

And moreover he has this great advantage, that the Image of Vertue being fairly described upon his mind, he has the true Zeal of it, or a certain impulse within him, for its due promotion in the World. So that when he does exhort to the achievement of any laudable thing, he has that very movement of Spirit, and lively concern within himself, which he would imprint in the minds of his Hearers; when he does incite to the love of *God, that most infinitely gracious Being*, who has prevented us with so many Blessings, you may see the vehement Pulses and Elevations of his own Heart, and even his very Soul fluttering up towards that great Object. When he persuades to any Vertue, with what Alacrity does he perform it? How lively does he express his own Complacency in that, while he is preparing the Consent of his Hearers? When he dis-

swades from any Vice, what Horror and Detestation may you observe in him, and how plainly may one discern his Soul against it ? And seeing there is such a general Sympathy in the Nature of Men, that they naturally follow one anothers motions, when in the use of his Rhetorick he recommends Vertue, or when he declares against Vice, and in that very thing expresse the different Affections of his own Mind ; his Love of the one, and his Aversion to the other ; how must he carry the Souls of the People along with him ? And therefore it is the Good Man that is the most prevailing Orator, who leaves no Power to refuse to him, but forces his Perswasions upon the Minds of his Hearers, and irresistably works an Assent in them. And if there should be none of this excitement of Affections, yet there is a proper Air or Spirit in honest Language, plainly discovering a Vertuous Man, which hath a strange Prevalency and Conviction with it. All which the two Great Orators,

Gorgias p. 326.
Ed. Basf.

Plato and Tully, knew very well, the one laying down this Apophthegm, *καὶ τὸν μάλ्लοντα ὀρθῶς ῥητορικὸν ἔσθαι διὰ τὸν ἀεὶ δεῖν εἶναι, καὶ ἐπισημον τὸν δεινόν :* And the other this, *Oratorem fieri vitæ dignitate.*

But it may be Objected, And cannot a bad Man counterfeit all this ? Cannot he rouse up his Passions, and appear as concerned for Vertue, and as eager against Vice, as he that has that true habit of Mind and Affections in him ? To which I answer, No ; let him use all the Artifices imaginable, and personate his part with never so much Caution ; yet a discerning Eye will quickly discover him to be no other than an Imposter. His dissembled Discourses will certainly want some of those Characters which are always observable in true ones, they will be either such extravagant things, as to the matter of them, as will plainly declare his small Skill and Acquaintance with Goodness ; or else be spoken so remissly, without the relish of mind, and those raised Affections, which constantly possess Good Men, when they are employed upon the Theme of Vertue ; that the Fallacy will be evident : and although perhaps he may be such a fanciful Mimick, as to act some of these indifferently well ; yet he will certainly err in some particular or other, as to the Measure, Order, or Decorum of it ; he will so
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falsly accent his Passions, placing the grave and lene in undue circumstances, that it must be manifest that he acts not his own part, but (*ἀλλοτρίωσκειν*) busies himself in other mens matters, and may challenge a Title to that of the Psalmist, *Why dost thou preach my law, whereas thou hatest to be reformed.* Hypocrisie is no such easie business; and although it be much endeavoured, and bunglingly done by many, yet 'tis seldom so happily performed, but an indifferent discretion may perceive it. Let a Man of this design use all the Art and Diligence possible, yet an unnatural representation, or some uncouth thing or other will declare him not the Person that he would appear to be. *Prodit enim se quamlibet castodiat, simulatio, nec unquam tanta fuerit eloquendi facultas, ut ne titubet ac hæreat, quoties ab animo verba dissentiant.* Hypocrisie, although it be never so cautiously acted, will declare it self; and there was never such a happy Eloquence, that did not stumble in some circumstance, when words did differ from the habit of the Mind, as *Quintilian* observes; and if perhaps some Good Man ^{*Inst. p. 862.*} be deluded by Hypocrites, it may be his goodness that has this one bad Consequence to it; this makes him too credulous, and apt to believe all Men to have the same honest Intentions with himself, and therefore he does not treat them with a due care and circumspection; however Dissimulation is no less a discernable thing to an attentive Observer, for all this. Hence therefore the Ministers of the Gospel are obliged to be very good Men, if they would rightly perform their great Office, and effectually move the People to the enterprise of Vertue and a good Life.

Fourthly, He that Indulges himself in any sinful Courses, cannot speak with sufficient boldness. He that has this sacred employment upon him, must impartially, and with a due severity reprehend Sin, wherever he observes it in any Person, and as diligently urge to the contrary Vertues; and this is a task that requires strong Courage and Resolution; for generally Men have too much love to their own Persons, or to the Animal part of them, which has this influence with it, that it lays a prejudice upon them, and makes them blind towards their own miscarriages. Some think themselves unjustly censured, and that their Life and Manners are

no matter of reproof, but rather Vertuous and Praise-worthy. That which is urged upon them as Profuseness, they esteem nothing more than an honest Liberality, a generous and bountiful temper of Spirit, that does much more good in the World, than hoarding up Estates by them. He that is taxed with that Idolatrous sin of Covetousness, will not believe it so; but rather accounts it a just Parsimony, and necessary Thriftiness, if he will provide for his own Family, and that he must do, unless he will be worse than an Infidel, and moreover this frugal mode of Living does wholly prevent the sin of Intemperance, and the manifold Mischiefs and Wickedness from it: Thus they will argue, and indeed upon another account, it is not much to be wondered at, that Men are thus mistaken concerning themselves, and that they do not know their own Immoralities. For Vice and Vertue touching and bending together in the extream points, 'tis a hard thing critically to define both their Provinces, and shew the indivisible Line of their Separation; as for instance, to set forth the Confines of Liberality in such a Circumstance, how far it goes before it degenerate into Profuseness; and upon this account the Ministers of the Gospel ought to be Learned Men, and able to determine our Christian Duty in every respect of it; but then how angry will such Men be, how full of Stomach and Indignation towards those Charitable Men, that only fasten their deserved Guilt and Vices upon them? How will they revile them for their just Reproof? And whilst they are discharging the greatest Office of Kindness to them, viz. Reclaiming them from the Error of their ways, they will only represent them in the stile of Slanderers, and false Accusers of the Brethren, *because* they have no due sense, or a selfish Opinion of their own Practices.

But there is a worse sort of men to deal with than these, namely, such as having contracted long Habits of their Vices, have now no due resentment of them, not so much from ignorance at the beginning, as the insensibility of Custom in them. How will these upon any Christian advice to them, as we have ordinary experience in the Case, asperse the Priesthood, and make them the Subjects of their Drollery, because they represent their Vi-

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ces to them with their due Consequents, and so hinder their greater satisfaction in them, which through the hardness of their Hearts, they could more obtain without this External Suggestion, and reminding of them; nay, if they proceed not farther than bare words against them, 'tis not that they want any degree of Malice, and Hatred to that purpose, but because the Providence of God, either immediately, or in the provision of Human Laws, does restrain them. How many have suffered in this necessary part of Charity, for reprehending their Brethren, and endeavouring their amendment? Almost all the Old Prophets are instances in this kind, and to whom may be added, a numerous Company of Christian Martyrs, with him also who was in the Confiner of these two States *John the Baptist*. So that the Ministers of the Gospel, may fitly be represented under that simile which the Prophet *Jeremiah* was (Chap. 1. 18.) *That God has made them a defended City, and an Iron Pillar, and Brazen Walls against the whole Land, against the Princes thereof, and against the People thereof.* And be sure, the greatest part of these being Vicious, will oppose and fight with him; now what a mighty Courage must he be indued with, what a Divine Valour, and an undaunted Soul must he have, as a prerequisite of *Grace* in him, which indeed will make him a defended City, who is to maintain himself against all this resistance. He must be arrived at that exalted Pitch, as to be above the Impressions of Fear or Favour, before he can enter upon that violent thing *to tell Judah of her Sins, and Israel of her Transgressions*, who have no mind to hear of them. He must be such a Person, that will not start back, or desist from this most Signal Charity to the Souls of men; for any Injuries of his own, though never so many be heaped upon him. If his eyes were opened, and he should see whole Legions of Devils marching against him (which indeed they always do, especially in this Business of Conversion, or rescue of Souls from them,) he must then be resolved to stand his Ground, according to that of the Apostle, and in a certain Faith of the event of it, *resist the Devil and he will flee from you*: Nay, if he should see Present Death advancing towards him, which is more sensible to Human Nature,

Nature, than those invisible Forces; or, which is worse, a state of Martyrdom, or long sufferings, he must determine himself not to shrink at all this, but constantly reprove Vice, although that be the Occasion of all his Miseries. He must neither suffer his own Modesty, which is often the Cause of too much Compliance, nor any apprehension from it to deter, or hinder him in a Prudent Freedom of this Duty. And the reason is plain, because otherwise he brings the Guilt and Punishment of the People upon himself: His Office consists in this Charitable thing of reprehension, and he must perform it for his own security, according to that of the Prophet Ezekiel (33. 7, 8, 9. *Son of man I have set thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel, therefore thou shalt hear the Word at my Mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the Wicked, O Wicked Man thou shalt surely dye, if thou dost not speak to warn the Wicked from his way, that Wicked man shall dye in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the Wicked of his Way, to turn from it, if he do not turn from his Way, he shall dye in his Iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy Soul.*

This therefore he must do for self-preservation, in that true respect of his own Soul. And now, who is sufficient for these things? Indeed none else but the Good Man. He has the courage of Vertue in him, and the Divine Assistance that belongs to it, and the Blessed hopes and expectations of it, and therefore he has no such apprehension of these outward Sufferings, nor would he save the Greatest Danger in the neglect of one instance of doing good, indeed if he should, he would be a loser by it. This was that Gallant Spirit that rested upon the Prophets, and first Preachers of the Gospel; These good men were as bold as Lions, and were not affrighted at any Terrour. What a daring reply was that of *Elijah*, when *Ahab* demanded, *Hast thou found me, O mine Enemy?* Yes, says he, *I have found thee, because thou hast sold thy self to work evil in the sight of the Lord,* (1 Kings 21. 20.) And how boldly doth *St. Paul* reason of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, before *Felix*, who was guilty of both the contrary Vices, which must needs make a Judgment a more sensible

ble thing to him, (*Acts 24.*) But why should I recount any more of these *Heroes*? Did they not all speak the same things? Were they not all inspired with the same Confidence? This is the Noble Temper, and Resolution of Vertue, which these Holy Men had such an exceeding share of. But Vice is a Poor-spirited and Base thing, it dares not engage with any Difficulties; but blushes and shrinks back at the least Opposition. The Sense of Guiltiness going along with it, does utterly debase the Mind, or Subject where it is, and makes it unfit for any Generous Enterprise. If a Wicked man presumes at any time to reprehend a Vice, perhaps he himself is Guilty in the same kind, and then what a Sneaking Spirit does appear in him? how does he betray his Bosom-Iniquities, at the naming of them in another? Or if haply he be not Guilty of the same things, yet his Abominations of another kind will check that gallant Courage and Freedom which is requisite upon such Occasions, and hinder all the Efficacy of his Reproof. A bad Man dares not look a Danger in the Face, nor venture himself upon any good Design. And indeed no wonder that he is so Basely Timorous, for he wants these two great Bottoms of Manly Resolution, *viz.* a right Conscience within him, and the reasonable Hopes of a better World: his own Mind suggests to him his after-Miseries, and therefore he is concerned to make as much of a short Life as he can, and never expose it upon any account whatsoever, although it be in the Cause of Vertue, that has such an advantage and recompence in it to a Good Man: And therefore how unfit is he for the Sacred Ministry, which requires so much Confidence in the Discharge of it? and how only qualified is the Good Man, who has all Fears removed from him, and therefore can freely rebuke Vice, and use a due boldness upon all occasions for it?

54. He that gives himself the Liberty of any open Vice, cannot speak with sufficient Authority; his Doctrines will not be received with that proper Regard and Esteem that belongs to them. The Minister of the Gospel must be a Grave and Venerable Person, such an one as can command Respect wheresoever he appears, and create a kind of Reverence for himself among

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all those that Converse with him, which will also give a Credit to his Doctrines. For it is not only strength of Argument that founds a Belief of any thing (as I proved before); but the Veneration of the Person, and his Authority, does often create a more certain Perswasion in the Minds of Men. This was the reason of the *Ipse dixit* in the Scholars of *Pythagoras*, who yet were very Sagacious Persons, and had the better Judgment of Good Morals in them, they were carried into an implicit Faith of things, from their great esteem of their Master, that his larger Knowledge, being attended with Integrity of Life, would by no means Impose upon them. And indeed these two Qualifications, a larger Knowledge, and Integrity of Life, with a due Gravity of Conversation, must needs be very Prevalent upon all those that know, and are acquainted with them. Whatsoever such a Person says, will be entertained with a kind of Reverence. His Precepts and Doctrine, whether he dissuade from Sin, or exhort to Vertue, will be very Effectual for that purpose, and carry something of Compulsion along with them; they will not be able to resist the Wisdom and Authority by which he speaketh: And his Discourses will not only be a strong dissuasive from Sin, but his very silent Person will have the same effect in it, none daring to commit any Undecent thing, while they are in his Converse, or inspected by him; nay, his Influence will be as it were Omnipresent in the several parts of his Sphere, so that Men will be afraid to transgress in any manner, if it be only probable to come to his Knowledge. Such an Authentick Person must the Minister be, such an Universal Restraint to all Impiety, in the Place of his Ministry. And who is able for this, but only the Vertuous and Good Man, he whose Pious Conversation hath got him a Venerable respect from all Men, so that his words are Powerful upon his Hearers, and always enforces both a ready Assent and Conformity to them? If he reprove them for any known Sin, or tell them of some unknown Part or Circumstance of their Duty, they are even compelled by his awfull Authority, and cannot resist or disbelieve him. Shame it self works them into Compliance, having no Evil Thing to say of him. That he hath

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spoken it, who has the undeniable credibility of an exemplary Life, is a sufficient Demonstration of it. But a Vicious Person can have no such Command or Prevalency upon his Hearers, except it be to the depraving of them. For certainly Sin has a great advantage from such a Man; if perchance he gives them some sober Instruction, they'll presently entertain him with that common Derision, *Physitian, heal thy self*, give a Proof of thy Skill and Sincerity in thy own Cure, or in the Remedy of thy own Distempers, before thou prescribe to other People. And indeed he must needs be as Ridiculous as Ineffectually, that puts on a Big Gravity towards others, and reproves their Faults with an Authentick Forehead, when he himself is guilty in the same, or in some other kind. And therefore, upon this Account also, it mightily concerns the Ministers of the Gospel to be very Spotless Men, that according to the Apostle (*Titus 2. 15.*) they may rebuke with all Authority, and have a more forcing and irresistible Influence upon their Charge.

6ly. A Vicious man cannot be Industrious enough in his High Calling, or that great Concern of Saving Souls; he will want a due Vigour and Incitement for it. It is no lazy Employment, that of the Ministry, but which requires an Intense Carefulness, and Indefatigable Diligence to the right management of it. The Province of him that is called to this Office, is large and difficult. *Who is sufficient for these things?* says the Apostle, when he was upon this Contemplation, (*1 Cor. 2. 6.*) Indeed none is in his Natural Endowments, although never so propitiously furnished, without a special Communication and Concourse with him. For if in every Common Christian, their whole Capacity of a good Life, and true knowledge of the Gospel, or the Mysteries of God, is from Grace; then the High Station of a Minister must needs depend upon this same Principle, and in a due performance require an extraordinary Influence of it. And I dare say, which may be a common Observation, That an Honest Mind and Industry is more able and more successful in the discharge of this Office, because in this means Men have a special Assistance with them, than the greatest Natural Parts and quickness can promise them-

selves, in their own confidence, as they stand upon an immodest Opinion of themselves, and are separate from that Humane means of Industry, and that blessed Consequence and supply of Grace to it.

First then, He must *constantly Preach the Word, Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort with all long Suffering, and Doctrine*, (2 Tim. 4. 2.) he must be very diligent in this particular of his Vocation, always perform it in its due frequency, and never neglect the solemn opportunities of it, lest through any careless intermission of his, some Soul should perish for want of timely Advice and Counsel, and then we all know at whose hand his blood shall be required.

And in this discharge he must remember, that Preaching the Gospel is a very grave and serious thing, according to the important Truths therein delivered, and the relation they have to our immortal Souls, or the eternal welfare of them. And therefore he must not intermingle those improper things of Jest, or Ridicule in it, which only puts mens minds into a loose habit; and so hinders all the efficacy of that solemn Imployment he is then about.

And besides, he must bestow a due Care and Labour in it, that his Discourses in Gods Embassie be not Rude and Slovenly, that can only prevail upon silly Women laden with sin; such as are those of our Dissenting Brethren, and such as the effect of theirs is; but that they may approve themselves to the Judgments of Men, and convince a larger Capacity, which being determined to an ill Life, can offer some more than ordinary defence for it. The Minister exposes God's Cause in a careless Reprehension of any Sin, and only confirms a more Sagacious Practitioner in it; when he offers no probable Discourse, or Inducement against it; and Vertue has a great disadvantage by him, when he does not duly set off the Divine Nature and Beauty of it; and therefore we must not make this Great thing of Preaching the Gospel an Extemporary business, lest we do God and Religion disservice in it, and only obtain upon simple People; as the Heathens said of old, when the more capable sort of them, or the more ingenuous Sinners are rather hardened in their Vices, and farther removed from their Repen-

Repentance, by that very means of it, when it is performed in such a negligent manner; will they not too properly call it, *The foolishness of Preaching*? And shall not we change that Calumny of the Apostle from the conceited *Corinthians*, into an undeniable Truth concerning our selves? It is impossible that *Extempory talk*, considering the nature of Humane Reason, that it being such a narrow and confined thing, always proceeds in a Progressive manner, and deduces one thing from another; it is impossible that *this* should have that Strength and Perspicuity in it, which Meditation, and a mature ranking of our Thoughts, may well afford in any matter.

Nor in this lazy deportment can we expect any Inspiration for our assistance, whiles we are wanting to our own Faculties, or to what we have in our own Power, and can perform from our selves. A due Exertion of our selves is always requisite for the Supplies of Heaven, because it is only a Concourse which we can reasonably expect thence, and no *entire Action*, which would deprive us of the essential Freedom of our Nature, or of our Nature it self, and turn us into meer Animals, that have a necessary Impulse upon them, and are only acted from an External Principle to them. Indeed the Apostles did contribute their whole Talent, who having no attainments of Arts or Sciences, when they were called to the *propagation of the Gospel*, did readily comply to it, (a ready compliance being all that they were capable of,) and therefore, because they did thus contribute their whole Talent, or all that they had in their own Power, they were abundantly supplied from Heaven, and particularly chosen for that Office, to which the Gift of Inspiration was necessary at that time; but those that are supine and negligent in this Apostolick Function, have no such Plea for it; and if any one should tell me, in whom I should see no concurrence of his own Industry, that he were inabled to speak from the Spirit, I should only reply, That he was an impudent Impostor for that Assertion; or, at the best, that he were under a high Possession of Phrenzy and Melancholly, which he did not rightly distinguish in him. Indeed this must be acknowledged, to the Glory of God, that there is a special Assistance in the Office of the Ministry; but then this is always conferred upon our own Labours in it, or when we offer all that

that we are able from our selves. But as to that degree or kind of Inspiration which was upon the Apostles, and continued in the Church for some * Centuries, when in that prevalency of *Paganism*, and Persecution from *it*, they had no opportunity of Humane Improvement; we who live in the peace of the Gospel, and have all the advantantages to study and understand the Christian Doctrine, in the due use of our own *Reason*, and common Grace with *that*, we have no need of it, nor can it be expected by us. And this we may take notice of, that what we acquire in a well-deduced Inference from Reason, is equally true, and as useful, as that which is supernaturally revealed to us. For our Conviction of the Truth of any thing is only this, That it be clear and evident to our Faculties, which may be in an acquired Proposition, as well as an inspired one; and therefore that Knowledge of the Gospel-doctrines, which we attain to in the Humane means of our Studies, with the common Influence of Gods Spirit, is as certain and unquestionable, as that which is the sole Impression of Infinite Wisdom, and wholly displayed from Heaven upon us. Now then, there being no extraordinary Effusions upon Preachers in our days, nor any justifiable occasion for it, such as might engage God to such an Instance; but his Holy Spirit only assisting their honest Endeavours, in less or larger measures, as he pleases, what Intense Thinking, and Meditation is requisite on our part, that we may speak the *Tremenda Dei*, the Oracles of God, as we ought to do, and not reflect Incoherence and Nonsense upon him, in the neglect of our own *Faculties*, and want of Heavenly assistance because of *that*, and so preclude any good effect of our Preaching, nay, promote a very ill one from it, that Men despise this Holy Ordinance, and in some process Religion it self, through the rude discharge of it? And therefore Preaching being now in a more Humane manner, and upon that account a more laborious thing, the People are in a great mistake, who expect such frequent returns of it, and from this Notion, that 'tis such an easie business, make so little recompence for it. And perhaps, which is the Opinion of Great Men, and as able and expert in Preaching as any, one Sermon in a Week, suppose there should

*Till Constantine's
time, Euseb. l. 7.
c. 32.

should be nothing else to divide his time with, that thing is indeed a sufficient Task for one Man, to be performed with those due thoughts and gravity that belongs to it. Which the more Primitive Christians were very sensible of, and therefore they had several Ministers, or several Orders of them, in one Church, for the more just performance of Gods Service, as Priests, and Deacons, and Sub-Deacons, and Readers (*ἀναγινώσκοντες*) every one for their proper Office. And although there were *two* appropriate to the Priests, Preaching the Word, and Administering the Sacraments; yet they were distinctly managed by them; and those that ministered in the Sacraments, which indeed is the most Priestly thing in that Office, had no concern in the other. So far are they mistaken who make Preaching an essential part of the Priest-hood. But this proceeds, as many other Errors do, from their want of Knowledge in the Records of the Church; and those who Preached and Instructed the People, or who laboured in the Word and Doctrine, as the Apostle speaks, 1 (*Tim. 5. 17.*) they had this sole Province upon them, which seems to be the Precept of this same Apostle, in another place, (*Rom. 12. 7, 8.*) *He that hath the gift of Ministry, let him wait on his Ministry; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation.* But the fervour of Religion in general, as well as Charity, is much abated in our days, and there is no greater Argument of this thing, than the indifferency of Men to the due performance of Gods Publick Worship, when they do not only not provide for the just Ministry of his Altar by Many, without which it cannot properly be done, but often not maintain One competently, even depriving him of his equitable Rights and Sustainance, according to the Apostle, (*1 Cor. 9. 11, 13, 14.*) *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* And now from hence to represent Mens Iniquity to them, what a small Compensation do they commonly make for the whole Employment of a Preacher, that being now in a more industrious way, (be-

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sides the whole Complicated Business of Holy Orders that they require of him) nay, for the Fruits of his Study, or the whole Employment of his Life before that, less than they would do to a Journeyman in some honest Trade; there are are not many, when 'tis a Voluntary thing, but would give more for three Words of a Lawyer, than for the Ministry of an whole year. This argues the little Sense of Religion that Men commonly have, or the small regard to their Souls, and that their Great Concerns are all exhausted about their Bodies: But I could wish, there were a certain Settlement in all Places, according to Gods own Appointment among the Jews; I could wish this, for the Freedom of the Ministry, and the Common advantage in that thing, that those of the Priestly Function might not be tempted only to Prophecie smooth things, and to humour the People in, their Vices, because of their dependance upon them; or indeed to sell them to Schism and Rebellion, for *pieces of Bread and handfuls of Barley*, as the Prophet speaks, (*Ezek. 13. 19.*) Which I wish we had not too much experienced in our days, and, in a timely Prevention of the Government, may never experience afterwards.

And then as to the extent of Preaching; he that maintains this Office, must not only direct his Discourses Universally against Sin, but against all the several sorts and kinds of it, there scarce being any which may not justly be expected to reign in some Individual of a Common Assembly; I say, he must be so particular, lest he should suffer some Soul securely and ignorantly, or in the Security that Ignorance always contains in it, to run on into its own Ruine. For although the Mind of Man be at first through the Goodness of his Maker, a very tender and conscious thing, yet in any ones indulging of himself in Sin, and in the Influence of that, it may be hardened, and have a certain insensibility, which is Ignorance, and no due apprehension of things brought into it; and this the Minister must endeavour to soften and restore, in suitable Discourses, or Applications to it. And this Universal reprehension of Sin, must needs be a very laborious Task, seeing that Vice, as *Aristotle* well observes, is so large and manifold (*παραδεχόμενος δὲ κακῶς, Eth. p. 29.*) Vertue, which ought

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to be the scope and measure of all our Actions, although it have some Latitude or Degrees in it, is but one simple thing; but there are infinite Ways; to digress from it: And he must not only give a particular Scheme of all Sins, but likewise represent their proper Aggravations, with those dismal Consequences that do attend the continuance in them, and then add his Disuasives from them, and these not only those General ones from the ingratitude of Sin against our Maker, and against our Redeemer, who Created us after his own Image, and who restored us to that again, in his Sufferings for us; nor from the consideration of the great Debasement that Sin brings into our Nature, with the like; but he must apply proper Remedies for every several Vice, or Distemper of the Soul, such as may have a singular respect in them.

And then there is a great Discretion to be used in his Preaching. There are different sorts of Men to be dealt withal, and those labouring under different Maladies, and Affections of the Mind; so that he must take a special heed to his Doctrine, if he preach up the Allowances of the Gospel, that that does not require a perfect unsinning Obedience, but admits of Sins of Infirmary, and sudden surreption, which may be called Sins of Ignorance, when we have not a due space to reflect upon them; that it admits of these, even when we are within the Covenant of Grace, and Partakers of the Heavenly Promises, if putting them into our Daily Confessions, we beg Pardon for them, and use our honest Endeavours against them for the time to come. Yet this Doctrine, although very necessary for the weaker Brethren, to maintain a right Faith in them, or to preserve them from Despair; yet bolder Spirited Christians, that think too well of themselves, and from that Selfish respect or Opinion, do not sufficiently distinguish between Wilfull Sins, and those of Humane Infirmary, will grow presumptuous upon it, and cast off that constant Care, and Diligence that is necessary in a Christian Life, or that they ought to maintain in all their Actions; on the contrary, if he too frequently insist upon the Black demerit of Sin, how every Disobedience, or every single Pollution thereof, unless washed away

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by a sincere Repentance in the Blood of our Saviour, does deserve Eternal Death, or Misery in the other World, which are Truths great, and certain, and very useful to beat down the swelling Pride and Arrogance of some Men; yet others being conscious to themselves of their frequent Miscarriages, and imputing too little to *Human Imbecillity, or the inherent appetites of a sensual Nature,* will be apt to fall into despair from this Doctrine, and because they cannot attain to an absolute Righteousness, perhaps they'll endeavour after none at all, becoming careless and stupid in the work of their Salvation, or quite desisting from any attempts of it, in a kind of diffidence of Gods Mercy, and too aggravated apprehensions of their own Sins. And therefore he must in great Prudence apply to Men who have these different dispositions in them, and so temper his Discourses with Law and Gospel, that he may promote a general benefit, or advance a just Confidence, and hinder Presumption in all of them.

And perhaps he must not insist upon meer Terror to the most obstinate Sinner, lest possibly, if they have any Intervals of Consideration from the importunity of their Vices, they should be swallowed up of too much Sorrow, or fall into Dispair by that means; but he must always intermingle, or jointly apply the Consolations of the Gospel, as *St. Paul* advises in the instance of the *most abominable Offender*, (2 Cor. 2. 7, 8.) that so they may have a due encouragement to Repentance and a good Life; especially if he observe a truly humble and contrite Spirit in them, which is the proper qualification for Mercy. Lest therefore this effect of too much Sorrow should follow from a Discourse of Mens Terrours, in a more likely Disposition for it, he must in the Language of the Prophet, and in the Office of Christ, whose Minister he is, (*Isa. 61. 3.*) appoint unto them that mourn in Sion beauty for ashes, the oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

And then, whether in Preaching, or private Conference, he most especially endeavour employing a main part of his Care and Diligence in that thing, to convince the Gain-sayers, or bring back those that are departed from us, he must not satisfy himself with their known obstinacy, that they are almost irreclaimable because of that, but he

he must try all Experiments, use his utmost Contrivance, in a due Charity towards them, to recover those Souls for whom Christ died, and enstate them in the *ordinary method of Salvation*; and therefore it is very proper to represent the danger of Schism, or being out of Communion of the *Church*: This is the Mystical Body or Corporation of Christ, in which are the more liberal influences of God's Spirit, and the free Circulation of all Heavenly Graces, as the Apostle illustrates by the similitude of the Head and Members in the Natural Body, (*Eph. 4. 15. Col. 2. 19.*) And therefore those that divide from the Church, or cut themselves off from Communion with it, they have not that special relation of Members to Christ, and so cannot enjoy such a free intercourse of Grace from him, or any certain hopes of Eternal Happiness in his Mediation for Mankind, both which are dispensed consequentially to one another, in this relation of Membership to him. All that can be said for such Persons is, That they having voluntarily cast themselves out of those means of Salvation which God has appointed, are left to his extraordinary Mercy, in a much worse case than many of the Heathens, or in a great abatement of their hopes, who perhaps never had the opportunity of joining themselves to, the Church of God, and maintaining one Uniform Worship with it.

And now, if possibly these Men should affirm themselves to be the true Church, and so think to remove this Consequence from them, it is very demonstrable, that our Church is not only the most reasonable Institution of a Church, which may be even defended in a rational way, without the advantage of Antiquity, but the very Ectype from the Apostles, or the nearest resemblance of their Platform, and the most Apostolick in the World, which none can deny without betraying a lamentable defect in Primitive History.

And if they should still defend themselves, that their Differences to us does not amount to a Dis-union from us, or from our Apostolick Church, but that notwithstanding they may be still accounted in Fellowship with it; it is too apparent, that *those who* do not consent in that particular Order, Government, and Ministry which God has ordained in his Church, but innovate in some of these

respects ; that is, *who* either will not Conform with an Episcopal Church, or Christian Society, governed in the most Primitive manner by Bishops, whom *St. Cyprian* so often styles the Principles of Unity, or that which makes a Church, when it is conjoynd to one Bishop, as the visible Head of it : And therefore the *Novatians, Donatists, Meletians*, who maintained another Head of Union, namely, the Martyrs, were all accounted Schismaticks by him, and other Fathers ; or *those who* will not submit to the Primitive Discipline of the Church, which was settled and instituted by the Apostles, they may well be said to renounce, and recede from *their* Church, because in this Obstinacy, or incomplyance they promote Factions and Discord in the Church, and so violating that indispensable Charity which ought to be in it, they lose their Christian Rights, or cease to be of it. Especially those that will not Communicate in the Sacraments of the Church, these being the essential Bonds of of its Communion, they must needs be accounted as divided Branches, and not of that Society ; indeed they have no publick badge to maintain themselves Christians from, and if they triumph in a good Life, as many of them do, they may rather be reckoned for a sort of Moral Religionists, then such as can pretend to Christs Name, or the Religion that he founded.

And now after all this, if we consider the Apostles account of *Schism*, which more plainly expresses the danger thereof, seeing it has the same relation to our Church, or ours being specifically the same with that which he founded, it may be more affecting, and more inforce a Reformation ; (*Gal. 5. 19.*) where he reckons up *Strife, Seditions, Heresies*, with those other abominable works of the Flesh, that does exclude from the Kingdom of God ; and then he shews the particular Character of this Sin, (*1 Cor. 3. 3.*) *Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men ?* And *St. Jude* saith the same thing, that *those who separate themselves are sensual, having not the Spirit ;* (*vers. 19.*) and to speak plainly, 'tis evident, that either Pride, which has always Obstinacy a Concomitant of it, that they would be accounted gifted Men, and have the credit of a *special acquaintance* wth the Spirit, which they think cannot consist with

a set Liturgy, although never so well composed, both as to the extent of Prayer, or good things that we should request for, and proper expressions of Devotion to promote a due Affection in us: it is this *same Pride or Covetousness, and some secular advantages from it*, that affords the reason of all Dissenters, *which* indeed are as carnal things, as Intemperance, or any other bodily enormity can be.

There can be no Plea of Conscience for it, at least in the more knowing of them; and when they urge this, they either in their proper art of dissimulation speak against their own Conscience, and true Notions of things, and so deceive some other honest People; or they have contracted an habitual prejudice from one of these two Vices, and their Indulgence in them, and so are under a Self-delusion, or deceive themselves in the case. And I am confident that if our Non-conforming Brethren should honestly examine themselves in their own minds, they would find, where profit does not determine, a great Preference of themselves, and mean Opinion of other Christians, who live in the sober use of their own Faculties, and the common means of Grace, without any pretensions to Miracles, or the extraordinary gifts of Gods Spirit; I say, they would find this Spiritual Pride in them, which indeed makes them what they are, or Dissenters from us; as also, hinders them from a due Confession of their Sin, and returning to us. This, I am confident, is the predominant Principle in all those that separate from us, however they began their Separation, whether from themselves, or had it more excusably derived to them through Education; yet this is in them, namely, a Self-applause, and contempt of others; and indeed the Apostle resolves it into this, (*Ephes. 4. 2, 3.*) as will plainly appear from a due reflection on that place; and therefore I believe, the best method with them is, first to subdue this unreasonable Swelling, or Imposthume of theirs, to advance some Sobriety in them, and a just Opinion of themselves, which only will make them capable of Conviction, or Reconcilement to the Church. For while they continue in their Pride, they continue in their Prejudice also, this being one effect of it, and have no free use of their judging Faculties. And therefore this Mountain is first to be removed, which indeed is a Moliminous enterprize, before we can do any good with them.

And

And then he may also offer the civil sin of Separation, or Disobedience to Lawful Authority, in dividing from a *National Church*, to which Uniformity is absolutely necessary; all difference of Worship, by ranking Men into several Parties, and promoting several Opinions, and Affections in them, inevitably making, if not an actual Disturbance, a most certain disposition for it in the State. And this is the Eternal reason of Penal Laws in Religion, to secure the External Peace of any Kingdom. And therefore the Minister must enforce the indispensable Obligation that those of any Society, or Government are under, to conform with the publick Expression of Religion, or the practice of the Church there; and nothing can justify a Division from it, but only sinful terms of Communion with it, which I am certain none can charge with any colour of Argument, so as to satisfy an Impartial Spirit in the thing, upon the most Pure and Primitive Church of Christ, in respect of outward Form and Discipline, as we may well maintain ours to be.

And then he may farther represent the great Blessings of Unity, which in their Separation they deprive themselves of, when the Publick Service is an Uniform thing, and our Prayers are sent up from an unanimous Consent, which gives the greatest prevalence to them, according to that of the Psalmist, comprehending the true Church of God, whether Jewish or Christian, (*Psalm 133.*) Behold how good and joyful a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity.—It is like the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion; for there the Lord promised his Blessings, and Life for evermore. And moreover, it is not only very decorous, but there seems to be a necessity for it, that they should maintain an inviolable Peace and Uniformity among themselves, who all pretend to be of one Body or Christian Community. all lay claim to one Spirit, the Eternal Comforter, all are called into one hope of their calling, all acknowledge one Lord, the Head and Redeemer of his Church. one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; as the Apostle argues, *Eph.*

4. 3. *One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; as the Apostle argues, Eph.*
And in all this management, I am apt to think, that although Pride and Prejudice; or Interest in some Persons, be the whole account

count of Separation, which would almost put ~~one out of~~ temper to dispute with those People; yet a due Candor or Argument, managed in a courteous manner, is the most effectual means to reclaim them, and convince them of their Error, as indeed it is to convince any. Ill Language, or fixing Names upon any Person, will never work a Conversion in him, but rather engage him in a bold defence of himself, and his Errors, both together, that he may thus remove such an Aspersions from him; this indeed is very dis-ingenuous; but I believe 'tis Natural to most Men; and therefore Railing, whether in the Pulpit, or other places, and Conference with Men, as it is a very Unchristian thing, and a great Trespas upon Charity, especially that most Charitable Office of Preaching, or Beneficence to Souls; so it is a very improper proceeding to convince any, or make them Profelytes to a good Cause; nay, one may easily observe in a due reflection on Humane Nature, that it will rather set them at defiance from it. And therefore those Unchristian Preachers, that use Railing in their Sermons, besides a base Temper they have antecedently in them, they are rather guilty of fortifying People in their ill Courses, than doing any Service to their Conversion. And I wonder how they can satisfie themselves in this deportment. There is a duty of Humanity incumbent upon us towards all Men, how Wicked and Perverse soever, and we must treat them with the proper respect of Humane Creatures, if we should find them no Christians; so that this thing of Railing is a casting off the Manhood it self, with the necessary Civility that is in it, and belongs to it, as well as the Candor of the Gospel, which adds a farther degree to this Civility. And therefore that advice of the Apostle, is both upon a Natural account, and a Christian, (*Eph. 4. 31.*) *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice:* and we read that Michael, when contending with the Devil himself, he durst not bring a railing accusation against him, (*Jud. 9.*) And the other Angels did behave themselves in the same manner, (*2 Pet. 2. 11.*) so that to bestow ill language upon any, besides the inefficacy of it to any good Purpose, can never be justified in any Person; and perhaps this being so contrary to Charity, the great

great distinguishing thing of the Gospel, argues a worse disposition in him that uses it, than any he can meet with in other People. And therefore fairness of Speech, and Argument, is the best method, both for our selves, and those we converse with, in order to promote a due advantage to them in our Discourses with them.

But then a Minister in all his Candor of Language with this Party of Men, must be sure to maintain his Ground still, or the Injunctions of the Church, and make no Condescensions from them in any thing: indeed in respect to a good Conscience he cannot do it, (and whether it be advisable in the State, 'tis not for me to determine.) The example of St. Paul, (1 Cor. 9. 20. 21.) who was a Jew in some instances, and Conformable to the reasonable Worship of the Heathens in others, does not at all comprehend our Case. He might do that, when the Church had not set her Authority upon any certain Form of Worship, or when the Publick Service was more free, and unsettled, which we cannot do who live under a *legal Establishment of Religion*; and a Canonical Obedience to *that*. And I dare say that St. Paul was as punctual an Observer of the Decrees of that first General Council held at *Jerusalem*, (*Acts*. 15. 20.) as any of us can be of those of our own National Church; and therefore when this Method of Gentleness will not prevail upon them, then it is necessary that he proceed to that extream thing of *Ecclesiastical Censures, or the Discipline of the Church*; as our Saviour lays down, (*Mat.* 18. 17.) which was the constant Practise of the Apostles, and at least approved by God from the custom of the *Jews*, if not positively instituted by him. And indeed this is the most proper Method to reduce and reclaim an Obstinate Sinner; who most likely in a due Punishment may have his prejudice much abated, or come to a free consideration of things, which will certainly produce a Reformation in him; or if this Effect fail upon himself, through an inflexible hardness, yet his circumstance may be very Beneficial to others, to deter them from the like Offences; and if his Guilt be so aggravated in an exclusion of Civil Commerce, to hinder the Influence of his Vices.

And

And I am Confident that our indulgence to obstinate Sinners, whether in the Church, or Dissenters from it, who through their Obstinacy have almost lost their right to our Christian Charity, or have no farther Plea for fair means; I am confident that our Indulgence, or neglect of *Censures* towards them, which are the Weapons of our Warfare in this respect, and which makes the Church of God as terrible as an Army with Banners, casting out every thing that defileth, or worketh Abomination from that Holy Communion; this is the Cause of that great Atheism and Profaneness that is in the Church, and that numerous Séparation from it, and we shall never deliver our selves from these two, till we reassume this Primitive Discipline and only Remedy of them.

This is the Province of a Preacher, and these good things, or these Precepts of Holiness, he must inculcate upon his Charge, not after the manner of Men, or with that remissness that is commonly used in indifferent matters, but with a proper importunity, and earnest Persuasion, so as to signify the moment of that concern he is then about, which is no less than the Salvation of Souls; one whereof is of more account than many worlds. He must, like the Apostles, (*1 Cor. 5. 20.*) reckoning himself the Ambassador of Christ, beseech men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled unto God; he must consider that he is Christ's Proxy here upon Earth, and therefore he ought to treat with Men after the same affectionate manner, that he did, calling them to Repentance and Reformation of their Lives, with such a Compassion towards them; that they would abound in all virtue, and continue in the same with all patience, and perseverance unto the end, when they shall receive the Crown of righteousness, which Christ the righteous judge shall give them at that day.

But he must not think that he hath wholly discharged himself in Preaching, there are several other things, which from his Office, and special relation to the Gospel, are incumbent upon him, He must be a Peace-maker as far as he is able, interpose himself as a common Arbitrator, and endeavour to make up all the differences of his Charge, preventing, as much as he can, the use of Law among them, and those uncharitable affections of Malice.

This was the Judgment and Practice of the Great Dr. Sanderson, in his Life, P. 13.

and Hatred that proceed from it ; which certainly is a great Argument against the growth and advancement of the peaceful temper of the Gospel in the minds of Men, as *St. Paul* speaks, (1 Cor. 6. 7.) *There is utterly a fault among you, because you go to Law one with another: Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer your selves to be defrauded?*

There was none of this litigious Process among the first Christians, a Friendly reference was the common Decision, or an end of all Controversies with them.

And then 'tis another important Office of his to visit the Sick, those that lye upon the Bed of languishing, to assist their Devotions, to afford them his Ghostly Counsel, in the *method* of their Repentance, *which* may be most proper for them, using all possible endeavours to deliver a Soul into the hands of Christ, and the glorious Armies of the Church triumphant: He must, according to the pattern of his great Master, continually go about in his Province doing good, be a general Supervisor of all their Actions, and reprehend Vice in his Conversation, as well as in the Pulpit; not thinking that his whole office of Reproof, or Instruction is performed there. He must be a Preacher of Righteousness in all places, and reprove, by the influence of a vertuous Example, where he cannot come in Person. All this he must do in this great employment of saving Souls, which if he perform well, with that special regard and diligence that he ought to do, let God deal with his People as he pleases, as shall be most agreeable to his infinite Goodness and Justice, he has delivered his own Soul, and laid up in store for himself a good Foundation against the time to come; but if he doth not thus discharge himself, woe unto him, yea, ten thousand woes, all the Coals and Miseries of his neglected Charge shall be heaped upon him.

And now who may we suppose will faithfully perform all this, there must certainly be some great incitement, some prevailing motive or other, in order to it? He must be invigorated with a strange Zeal, *which* only will furnish him with a due patience to that purpose: Who can pass through so many difficulties, and sustain such a Province? And nothing can be sufficient for this, but that prevailing motive

motive above all others, the love of God working in him, and powerfully inciting him to all possible instances of his Glory. Which love of God must needs embrace his whole image in Humane Nature, and extend it self to all Men in an eminent measure. So that he who has the Love of God must needs be indued with fervent Charity, and have vehement impulses in his Spirit, towards the procurement of a common Salvation in the World. Indeed, Love of God, and Charity to Men, are not separable, or cannot be distinguished from one another, but are only an extension of the same thing; this is indivisible, or these two always go together : And therefore St. *John* tells us, (1 *Eph.* 4. 20.) *If a man say he loveth God and hateth his Brother, he is a Lier.* If he be possessed of this Love, which is always maintained upon a true Faith, and cannot be separate from it, then no difficulties, nor hard adventures whatsoever will terrifie him, when there is hopes of winning a Soul, and enlarging the Borders of Christs Kingdom. This was exemplified in St. *Paul* ; the love of Christ constrained him, and the exceeding desire he had for the Salvation of his Brethren, as appears from that strange imprecation (*Rom.* 9. 3.) when he wished himself accursed from Christ for their sake, that is, to be excluded from the Communion of Christs Church, which hath such certain Hopes and Blessings in it, and be as a Heathen Man, and a Publican, or in the state of the Heathen World, which does sufficiently denote those accursed that are so, if they were but truly sensible of it ; and then having this complicated Motive in him, how does he labour to gain Profelytes in the Christian Faith ? *How does he become a servant, a labourer with his own hands ?* Depriving himself of the rewards of the Altar : *A Jew* receding from many Privileges of the Christian Liberty ; *to those without the law, as without law, even all things to all men* (as far as the Gospel dispensation, and the more unsettled condition of the Church at that time would allow him) that he might by all means save some : Neither was his Charity only confined to his Brethren, or Kinsmen, according to the Flesh, but he travelled over the greatest part of the habitable World, not to see several Countries, or understand different Policies, or behold the State and Splendor of Earthly Kingdoms, for his

Learned Mind was furnished with all this before ; and having a Soul so full of Heaven, where he had once been, he mightily despised the Pomps and Pageantry of this World, which indeed any good Christian would do, especially upon his advantage of an interview of them both ; but it was still that more generous design to save Souls, and propagate in all places the Divine Life, and influence of the Gospel, that gave the Reason of his Labours : But Vicious Men, wanting these two Motives, or double Principle in their Spirits, *viz.* An ardent Love of God ; for if they were possessed of this, they would not continue in any willful Sin, which is Enmity against *him* ; and also, a hearty concern for the Good of Men, the reflex act of the former ; I say, they wanting this double Principle, which only can excite them to the incessant Labours, or painful Imployment of the Ministry, and enable them under it, they can never perform it with that due care that is requisite in it, but will rather be like those watchmen in (*Isa.* 56. 10.) whom that Prophet describes, as wanting several of their Senses, that they were blind, ignorant, dumb Dogs, who could not bark, or give sufficient notice of Sin and Judgment, Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber, which are all to denote a careless Pastor : But let such Shepherds know, that God will certainly be against them, and require his Flock at their hands.

But Seventhly, Supposing that a Vicious Man could be found in his Principles, and industrious in his Calling, with the other requisites of a Minister, that I have here mentioned, which I believe is morally impossible, yet his ill Example will much hinder, if not wholly disappoint the good effect of his Doctrine. The Examples of Governours, whether tending to Vice or Vertue, have a very large and prevailing Influence. This is a thing of familiar Observation, and every Age does abound with fresh instances of it ; but the worse Examples, because of the depraved Inclinations of Humane Nature, which we have either wholly contracted, or much improved upon us ; these Examples are more spreading : Most Men are willing to gratifie their sensual Appetites, and are very glad when they can meet with any small Argument to that purpose ; but no Examples are of more pestulential consequence, than those of the Clergy :

Clergy: For those things that should aggravate and heighten the sense of their Crimes, create a stronger detestation of them, namely, *their Sacred Function; and larger Knowledge of Divine things,* these prove great perswasives and encouragements to the same Impieties. For they will say, at least the more ignorant sort of People, or the more habitual in their Vices, these having more Understanding than we have, are also obliged to a greater Sanctimony, and strictness of living: Why therefore should we deprive our selves of those Liberties, and Pleasures, those necessary recompenses of a careful Life, which they enjoy, especially when 'tis probable that our scant knowledge and notion of things does only restrain us? For if either of those Actions were sinful, which we suppose so, or were attended with such dismal consequences, then certainly they, whose Lips must preserve Knowledge, and who are as nearly concerned in the case as we are, would perceive it, and live otherwise. And thus the more eminent their Station, the more solemn their Charge is, the farther they will their ill Example dilate, and carry a more spreading Contagion along with it. And hence we read in the Canons of the ancient Church, that *Priests* were often deposed for small Offences; not from this Opinion, that such being so indisposed for Holy things, did frustrate the event of them; (for 'twas only one particular Sect of the *Donatists*, who maintained the Piety of the Minister, as necessary to the efficacy of his Ministry, or the Sacraments administred by him) but especially to prevent the great prevalency of an ill Example upon those below them, by shewing some remarkable instance upon *them*.

And now, to conclude, If the Good Man only be Sound and Orthodox in his Principles; if he be an Universal Teacher, both to dissuade from Vice in general, and exhort to every particular Vertue; if he be the most perswasive and prevalent Orator; if he hath that holy boldness from his own innocency, to be affrighted with none Aspects, or terrors of wicked Men; if he hath a vigorous love of God in his Spirit, and *servent Charity* towards his Brethren, *which is only another branch of it*, so that he will refuse no labours, or troublesome enterprises whatsoever, for the advancement of Gods Glory, and the Salvation of Souls, which are only two notions ill divided
and

and the same thing; if he transcribe his Doctrines into his own practice, and shew himself a pattern of good Works, and by this means, in a Vertuous Life, has gained a great Veneration among all People, so that he carries a kind of Authority along with him, those of the contrary part being ashamed, having no ill thing to say of him: If the Good Man hath all these gifts and qualifications in him, then he must needs be the most successful Preacher, and the Gospel will best thrive and prosper under his endeavours: And if a bad Man want all these, then he is never like to promote Religion in the World, or bring any advancement to Christ's Kingdom.

And therefore as many of us as have this sacred Employment upon us, to be Labourers in Christ's Vine-yard, *must cleanse our selves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* We must be spotless, and irreproveable, not only for our own sakes, but for the sakes of the People among whom we Converse and Live; we should ascend to some eminent degrees of Vertue, and Holiness. Our great calling requires it from us, not being contented with the common measures of the World, however we must preserve our selves from any thing of Scandal, or open Impieties, lest we bring a disparagement to the Gospel, and hinder the influence of it in the minds of Men, they are in a great mistake, that think themselves only fitted for the Ministry by their *Learning, which* indifferently is an Instrument, either of Good or Evil, according to the hands it happens to fall into. And I dare boldly affirm, That abstracted Learning, when 'tis separated from Goodness, is the most pernicious thing in the Christian World, and has produced the greatest mischief in it. How came so many Heresies and *base Notions* among us, *which* always have ill Practices founded upon them, but only that some Vicious Man, through his Parts, and acquired Knowledge, became able to defend his Vices, and recommend them to the World, under the specious habit and appearance of Vertue? It is extremely better to want Learning, when it is not directed by Vertue, than to have such an ambiguous thing in us, which may easily produce such an ill consequence of it. And therefore we must especially endeavour after a more signal Holiness, as a just qualification for the Ministry, which is also the best method

thod of attaining to true Learning. Others may spend their time in trifling Notions, and pretend to an Universal acquaintance with all Nature, as if they had been at Counsel with the Almighty when he made the World; yet if they'll deal but ingenuously with themselves, they must still confess that there are abundance of occult qualities, even in the most ordinary things, and that they cannot presume to the true Philosophy of one Single grass-pile; but the Good Man is the only Scholar, his Learning is in a better kind, and of a more useful consequence, both to himself and the whole World; for he hath Gods Blessing in all his Studies, and is directed and assisted by it. If then we would not only fit our selves for the more sacred Character of the Clergy, but also be good Proficients in true Learning, we must begin at Vertue, and found all our endeavours upon it, or manage them all in a joynt exercise of it, and then we shall attain to the most concerning Knowledge, or the best Improvements that we are capable of, (which others can never do in all their un sanctified Labours) according to that of the Psalmist, *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do thereafter.* And if we do not then so minutely know the several motions and designments of Nature, in her smallest Operations, which some fondly pretend to, the happier we, this argues that we are better employed, and that our more useful Contemplations are not interrupted with insignificant and empty subtilties, such as have no influence upon the Mind, towards any Moral improvement of it. That we may all of us proceed in this method to improve our selves, and serve God in his Holy Church, God of his Infinite Mercy grant, &c.

F I N I S.